

Frequently Asked Questions

For Request for Proposals – On Ramp to
NND14480735R - SRLV Flight and Payload Integration Services
November 2015

NASA wishes to encourage all qualified vendors to propose their services on this multiple-award contract. We recognize that many potential offerors have never done business with NASA, or the US Government. This can be a daunting task at first glance – it's a complex and potentially confusing process. For those new to the Federal procurement system, there are many new procedures that you will need to follow. In the interest of fairness, and to assure that the Government is spending the taxpayers' dollars wisely, we have strict rules that we must follow in the selection process. You should become familiar with the applicable Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR), this Request for Proposal (RFP) and any associated amendments.

We want this to be as painless a process as possible. You are encouraged to contact the contract specialist (listed in the RFP) for clarification on any areas of confusion. We would also appreciate your calling to our attention any errors or unclear areas in the solicitation. We will promptly respond to all relevant questions and comments.

For those responders new to the NASA procurement process, we encourage you to research the available information describing how to do business with the government. The NASA Office of Small Business Programs (OSBP) has an excellent primer for new business partners, which can be found at: <http://osbp.nasa.gov/business.html>. (Most of this information applies regardless of your business size).

1. **Q:** I've never proposed work for NASA. How do I begin?

A: Carefully read the **ENTIRE** RFP, amendments, and related attachments, especially the Performance Work Statement (PWS). Be sure you are prepared to provide **ALL** the required information. Pay particular attention to the Proposal Preparation Instructions and Evaluation Criteria. If you fail to provide required information or propose services that are not in the scope of the PWS, we probably will have to eliminate your proposal from consideration.

2. **Q:** The solicitation refers to a "NAICS Code" of "481212". What does that mean?

A: The NAICS, or "North American Industry Classification System," is the standard used by Federal agencies in classifying business establishments. The code used for this acquisition is for nonscheduled space transportation. You should ensure that your company is registered with this code. You may have more than one code listed for for procurement purposes (the US Census Bureau requires designating only one NAICS Code, that of the primary business purpose of the entity, for statistical purposes).

3. **Q:** How do I submit a proposal?

A: Beginning with this amendment to the solicitation (On-Ramp 2), proposals will be submitted by electronic means only, and we will not accept physical (paper, CD ROM, thumb drive, etc.) proposals. You must send a NOIP (Notice of Intent to Propose) via email to the designated email address within one week of the due date in order for us to send you a link for submitting your proposal via secure file transfer in PDF format. (Details for doing this, as well as the NOIP format, are contained in the RFP Amendment).

4. **Q:** What happens if the Government doesn't receive my proposal by the specified deadline?

A: We can't accept late proposals. The deadline is a firm requirement. The best way to ensure a timely receipt is to avoid submitting your proposal too close to the deadline.

5. **Q:** How will I know that my proposal was received by the Government?

A: You will receive a confirmation email that is automatically sent by the secure file transfer server.

6. **Q:** What happens if I don't provide all the information required in the RFP, such as pricing for all base and option years?

A: We'll have to consider your proposal nonresponsive and we won't be able to evaluate it.

7. **Q:** Do I need to register in SAM (System for Award Management) to propose?

A: You need to be registered in SAM in order to be awarded a contract. You should initiate this process as soon as possible, as during peak periods it can take several weeks to be approved. For more information, refer to: <https://www.sam.gov>

8. **Q:** I plan to use an affiliate as the provider of the flight services that I am developing. Can I still propose?

A: Whichever is the lead business (prime) entity should propose. If the Government will be obtaining the primary services from your affiliate, it is considered the lead business entity. The Government requires full disclosure of all entities involved in the work, whether they are considered, "subcontractors," "affiliates," "partners," or "team members."

9. **Q:** Do I have to submit a signed SF-1449? Who signs the SF-1449?

A: Yes, that is a firm requirement. It must be signed by a representative of the primary business entity with authority to commit the entity to perform the required services.

10. **Q:** I'm planning on teaming with one (or more) companies in order to provide the best services to the Government. Do I need to list all of these companies?

A: If there is to be some type of teaming arrangement involving subcontractors, partners, affiliates, or other arrangements, you must specify those arrangements in

your proposal, including the names of the entities along with details of the teaming arrangement and written commitments from all of the team members.

11. **Q:** Does the primary (lead) proposer have to be a US company?

A: Yes. A major goal of this program is to stimulate the US Commercial Space industry, so foreign entities may not be a lead proposer.

12. **Q:** Must all companies and subcontractors with which I team be US companies?

A: No, only the lead entity need be a US company. Be aware that the US Government is legally prohibited from doing business with certain countries considered hostile to US interests, and that would apply to any entity involved in your proposal.

13. **Q:** I would like to propose parabolic aircraft as a means to achieve microgravity. Could this be part of your contract?

A: No. Parabolic aircraft services are out of the scope of work, which is limited to suborbital launchers, planetary landers, high altitude balloons, and other types of spacecraft.

14. **Q:** Will you be sponsoring human flight participants?

A: No. While there is no restriction for a proposer having crewmembers or passengers onboard their flight vehicles concurrent with flying NASA payloads, human flight participants will not be included in this contract, either as passengers or crewmembers. This does not preclude an offeror proposing a special service involving their own crewmember providing monitoring or activation of a payload on a non-interference basis with other crew duties.

15. **Q:** What constitutes reasonable deviations from the flight profiles listed in the PWS?

A: The profiles constitute minimum requirements for the vehicle's altitude, mass, and volume capabilities, defined from the payload perspective. Deviations must be justified in your proposal and must be based on some unique capability that is within the overall scope of the effort.

16. **Q:** What is a Qualified Vehicle Family?

A: As defined in the PWS, a QV Family (or "QVF") is a group of closely related flight vehicles with similar characteristics that are capable of flying similar flight profiles. Qualification of one member of the family is sufficient to qualify all family members. "Closely related" means the same type of propulsion, same overall configuration and design, and the same basic flight and recovery characteristics. Payload mass and volume may differ, but payload accommodation should be based on the same design.

17. **Q:** What is proof of a Qualified Vehicle?

A: You must provide evidence of successful flight(s) showing that the QV or QV family is capable of providing one or more of the Flight Profiles as defined in the PWS. "Successful flights" should be test flights or flights for pay, that were launched

and recovered successfully with payload intact and whose salient characteristics closely approach one or more of the PWS Flight Profile characteristics, including payload mass and volume, as well as altitude achieved. The evidence should be conclusive, such as photographic, video, or official independently documented records.

18. **Q:** How much work will I receive if I am selected?

A: This contract is for NASA-directed payloads, sponsored by the Flight Opportunities Program. You are strongly encouraged to seek other commercial opportunities both within and outside of NASA. If selected, you will be awarded a contract with a task order for the minimum contract value. The minimum value is typically for the least expensive standard payload slot for one flight. There is a possibility of additional work, but that is not guaranteed. You will have to compete with other vendors on the contract who are performing similar work for the same profile. Also there must be payload requirements that fit within the flight profile you have proposed, and fit within your performance capabilities.